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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

RE: HCR 43/HR 23 - REQUESTING THE HAWAII TEACHER STANDARDS
BOARD TO REVIEW RULES REGARDING LICENSING OF TEACHERS
IN HAWAII WITH OUT-OF-STATE TEACHING LICENSES TO
DETERMINE IF THERE ARE BARRIERS TO THOSE TEACHERS BEING
LICENSED IN HAWAII.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2012

WIL OKABE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association supports HCR 43/HR 23, which requests the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board to review rules regarding licensing of teachers in Hawaii with out-of-state teaching licenses to determine if there are barriers to such teachers being licensed in Hawaii.

HSTA supports all attempts to increase the pool of qualified teachers employed in Hawaii's schools, including teachers with out-of-state teaching licenses, as long as all teachers are held to the same professional licensing and certification standards. Increasing the number of licensed, qualified and highly effective teachers in our classrooms will increase student achievement by providing children with effective and diverse instructional techniques, and will also impact our schools' student-to-teacher ratio, allowing for more direct engagement with individual learner needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAI'I TEACHER STANDARDS BOARD

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

**Re: HCR43 and HR23 REQUESTING THE HAWAI'I TEACHER STANDARDS
BOARD TO REVIEW RULES REGARDING LICENSING OF TEACHERS IN HAWAI'I
WITH OUT-OF-STATE TEACHING LICENSES TO DETERMINE IF THERE ARE
BARRIERS TO THOSE TEACHERS BEING LICENSED IN HAWAI'I**

Hearing Date: February 21, 2012, 10:45 a.m.

**Testifying: Lynn Hammonds, Executive Director, Hawai'i Teacher Standards
Board**

**Chairperson Rhoads, Vice Chairperson Yamashita and Members of the
Committee on Labor & Public Employment:**

The Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board supports the intent of HCR43 and HR23 and thanks the House of Representatives for their support in assisting qualified out-of-state teachers in obtaining their Hawai'i teaching license. Over the last two years, the HTSB has streamlined the licensing process for teachers prepared out-of-state. In 2010, the board commissioned a study of licensure preparation and testing in the other forty-nine states and revised the requirements for licensure of out-of-state applicants on February 28, 2011.

Based on this study, the board granted full reciprocity to out-of-state teachers who were licensed for the first time in their home state within five years of application for a Hawai'i license. This was based on the finding that states required either a traditional or alternative route teacher preparation program and verification of basic skills and content expertise to those teachers licensed within the last five years. This means that a teacher meeting this requirement would only submit a license application, which may be completed online, and official verification of their out-of-state license. Many states offer this verification online; for those that do not, a teacher would submit either their original or a notarized copy for review by HTSB.

Those out-of-state teachers who received a license more than five years prior to their Hawai'i license application date may submit one of the following to meet licensing criteria:

- Hawai'i license application and a one page form that is completed by their home state licensing agency to verify they hold a license, completed a preparation program and passed basic skills and content licensure tests.

OR

- Hawai'i license application, an official transcript that verifies they completed a teacher preparation program, an official copy of their out-of-state licensure test passing scores in basic skills and content knowledge, and verification of their out-of-state license. Using this option, an applicant could possess all required documentation and submit it at one time, eliminating the need to wait on the out-of-state agency to respond to their request for verification.

In the event a teacher from out-of-state has not completed a teacher preparation program, they may submit verification of their license and at least three years of satisfactory teaching experience of out the last seven years. They must also submit passing basic skills and content knowledge tests, just as all other license applicants.

The board continues to review licensing criteria for ways to make the process more "user friendly" while maintaining rigor and integrity. HTSB is currently gathering data to consider whether the basic skills test requirement may be waived for those teachers who hold a current out-of-state license with teaching experience, and hopes to consider a change in the policy prior to the close of the 2011-2012 school year.

With these new policies and procedures, the HTSB reflects national trends in licensing and has provided a streamlined process for out-of-state teachers to become licensed while ensuring they possess content and professional knowledge needed to teach in Hawai'i's classrooms.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.